

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 3380

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: KN, KS, LI, CH, PEPR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO PEKING: RELATIONS WITH NORTH
KOREA

1. ASSISTANT FOREIGN MINISTER FOR AFRICAN AND ASIAN
AFFAIRS CHRIS MINIKON AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE
FOREIGN MINISTER MARJON KAMARA, IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS
WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR MAY 4 5, CONFIRMED LOCAL
RUMORS THAT PRESIDENT WILLIAM R. TOLBERT WOULD BE MAKING
A STATE VISIT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. EARLIER
PLANS TO GO TO CHINA IN MID-JUNE, FOLLOWING A MEDICAL
CHECK-UP IN SWITZERLAND, MIGHT BE CHANGED TO PERMIT AN
EARLIER VISIT, PERHAPS IN LATE MAY, ACCORDING TO KAMARA,
LEAVING THE PRESIDENT MORE TIME TO PREPARE FOR THE OAU
SUMMIT IN JULY.

2. MINIKON AND KAMARA ALSO NOTED THE ARRIVAL MAY 4
OF A DELEGATION FROM NORTH KOREA. BOTH DISCOUNTED THE
POSSIBILITY THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT MIGHT COMBINE A
VISIT TO PYONGYANG WITH HIS CHINA TRIP. KAMARA STATED
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THAT LAST YEAR WHEN A NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION HAD
INVITED PRESIDENT TOLBERT TO VISIT PYONGYANG, THE
PRESIDENT HAD BEEN POLITE IN HIS RESPONSE BUT HAD NOT
GIVEN ANY FORMAL ACCEPTANCE. IN ANY CASE, ACCORDING
TO KAMARA, THE PRESIDENT WOULD VISIT SOUTH KOREA BEFORE
CONSIDERING A TRIP TO THE NORTH.

3. COMMENT: PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAS NEVER VISITED THE SOVIET UNION. HIS ACCEPTANCE OF AN INVITATION BY THE PRC IS A REFLECTION OF LIBERIAN GRATITUDE FOR THE PRACTICAL AID GIVEN BY THE PRC IN RICE AND SUGAR PRODUCTION (A CONTINUATION OF PROGRAMS BEGUN BY THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA); FOR THE OFFER TO BUILD A SPORTS STADIUM; AND FOR THE SCRUPULOUS AVOIDANCE SO FAR OF "INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS" OF THE GOL, IN OBVIOUS CONTRAST TO ACTIVITIES OF THE LESS RESTRAINED SOVIETS.

CARTER

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NNN

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